Progress report on Centrally-aided schemes

1336. SHRI MANOJ BHATTACHARYA: Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state:

(a) whether his Ministry had sought by November 15,2003 the detailed progress report in respect of the Centrally-aided schemes in the various States, especially where the assembly polls had been announced;

(b) if so, the details thereof and the reasons therefor; and

(c) whether the requisite information was received in time and if so, the utilization status of the Central aid?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI RAVI SHANKAR PRASAD): (a) to (c)The information asked in respect of all the States is being collected and will be placed on the Table of the House.

CAS for customers

†1337. DR. PRABHA THAKUR: Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state:

(a) whether CAS would be beneficial to the customers;

(b) whether CAS would be cheaper than the cable system;

(c) whether viewing of programmes of various channels would not be possible without Set Top Box; and

(d) whether the people who are unable to install Set Top Boxes would be deprived of viewing various channels?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI RAVI SHANKAR PRASAD): (a) and (b) CAS would be beneficial for consumers for the following reasons:-

(i) Government has specified Rs. 72/- (Plus taxes) as the maximum price of basic service tier, consisting of not less than 30 Free-To-Air (FTA) channels of different genres of entertainment, news, sports, children's programmes and music. Additional free-to-air

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

channels would also be available to subscribers within the maximum amount mentioned.

(ii) Consumers will have the choice to pay for only those pay channels which they choose to watch.

(iii) Consumers will have a control over the content they wish to view.

(iv) It has been made obligatory for cable operators to make provisions for rent, security deposit, repair and maintenance of Set Top Boxes (STB).

(v) Some MSOs/Cable Operators have come out with consumer friendly schemes through which the STBs will be made available to consumers.

(vi) Government has reduced the duty on import of STBs and its components to make them more affordable.

(c) and (d) STB will be required for viewing pay channels only and not for FTA channels. Subscribers who cannot afford STBs would have the benefit of watching at least 30 free-to-air channels. Some MSOs have indicated that they would have the capacity to show 60-70 free-to-air channels in their networks.

Violation of the guidelines for cricket telecasting

1338. SHRI ABANI ROY: Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Doordarshan has threatened to sue the private TV channels for the prolonged use of DD's cricket footage;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether the private TV channels have violated the DD guidelines in telecasting cricket matches held recently; and

(d) if so, the action taken by Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI RAVI SHANKAR PRASAD): (a) to (d) After observing that certain channels were unauthorisedly using the footage